



THE ECHOING PRACTICE

“Listening Without Story”

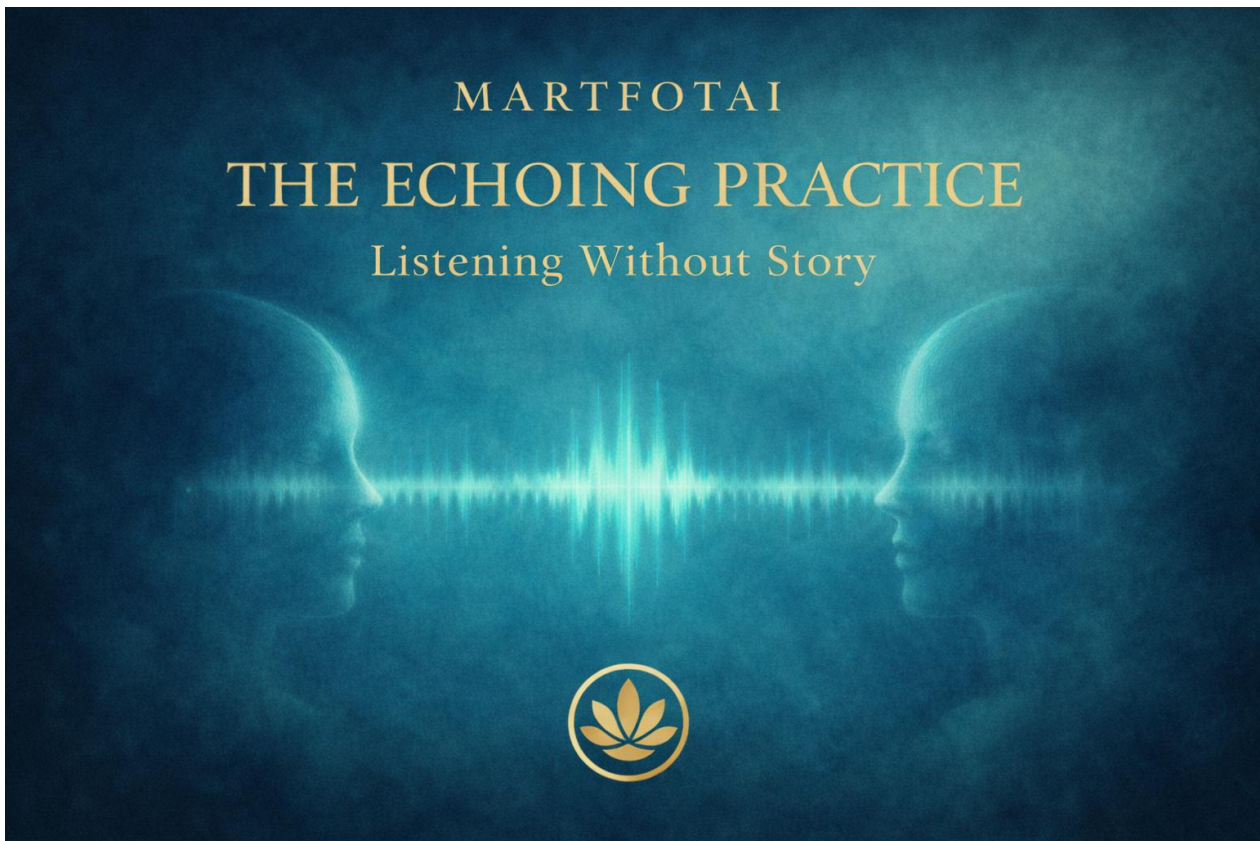
Path 1 – Foundation Level - A Pre-Class Practice Guide

Class: Sunday 15th February 2026

9:00pm CET | 8:00pm GMT | 3:00pm EST | 2:00pm CST | 12:00pm PST

Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82806986967?pwd=FkVOjChqXgkNCdLRHhrYodTj68dDWr.1>



“We listen to our own thoughts when learning, therefore we cannot hear new thoughts, only by new methods of listening and studying.”

— G.I. Gurdjieff
London, February 13, 1922
Views From the Real World, p.40

1. BEGIN LISTENING

Right now, as you read this, notice something simple.

You are not reading words on a page.

You are listening to a voice inside your head speaking them.

That voice rarely stops.

It comments. It interprets. It rehearses what you will say next. It jumps ahead. It drifts away.

When someone speaks to you, that same voice continues. Louder. Busier.

You may never have truly listened to another person.

You may only have waited for your turn to speak.

This is The Echoing Practice.

It changes that.

2. THE RECOGNITION

Try this now.

Read the next sentence slowly. But instead of letting the narrator race ahead, silently repeat each word immediately after reading it. Echo it.

“The ... practice ... is ... simple ... but ... transforms ... EVERYTHING.”

Did you notice?

When you echoed, the mechanical commentary stopped.

It could not comment.

It could not drift.

It was occupied.

That is the mechanism.

You cannot mechanically comment and consciously echo at the same time.

There is only one inner speaking channel.

When conscious echoing uses it, mechanical commentary has nowhere to go.

The space opens.
You actually hear what is being said.
And people recognise it.

3. WHY YOU DON'T LISTEN

Mechanical commentary has been running your listening your whole life.

When someone speaks, you tend to:

- Judge what they are saying before they finish
- Rehearse your reply while they are still talking
- Compare their experience to yours
- Drift away mid-sentence
- React internally to tone, word choice, and implication

None of this is listening.

It is commentary *about* listening.

The person speaking feels this.
They sense you are not present.

Relationships suffer.
Conflict escalates.
Misunderstanding compounds.

Because nobody is actually receiving anybody.

4. BEFORE WE BEGIN: FOUNDATION FIRST

Stop here if any of the following are true:

- Your basic needs are not met (sleep, food, safety, support)
- You are in crisis or acute distress
- You cannot access a calm, neutral state
- This practice increases your distress

If any apply, pause. This practice is premature.

Gurdjieff called this the **First Obligolnian Striving**:

“To have in their ordinary being-existence everything satisfying and really necessary for their planetary body.”

Translation:

Rest.

Eat properly.

Feel safe.

Seek support.

Care for your body.

You cannot teach a drowning person to swim.

When you are on solid ground, return here.

The Work will wait.

5. THE PRACTICE: ECHOING

Echoing displaces mechanical commentary by occupying the one inner voice.

Presence appears through reception, not effort.

In that space, you hear what is actually being said before responding.

6. HOW IT WORKS

1. Someone speaks (or you read, or hear a sound)
2. You silently repeat what you hear, syllable by syllable, just behind it
3. No interpretation. No commentary. Just echo

That is all. The echo creates a buffer between stimulus and reaction

7. STARTING SIMPLE: WRITTEN WORDS

Begin with written text. It moves slowly.

Read anything and echo every word silently:

"Martfotai... The... Echoing... Practice..."

Notice:

- You read more slowly
- You remember more
- Mechanical commentary pauses

- You are present with the text

Do this for **2 minutes, twice a day**, this week.

8. MOVING TO SPEECH

Once written echoing is stable, move to spoken words.

Choose situations where no immediate response is required:

- Television
- Podcasts
- Someone telling a story

As they speak, echo silently:

“Today... we... discuss... the... weather...”

At first you will lose it.

Mechanical commentary will interrupt:

“This is boring.”

“I need to reply.”

“What should I say?”

When you notice this, simply return to echoing.

No judgement.

No correction.

Just echo again.

After a week, something changes.

You remember conversations accurately.

People feel heard.

Reactivity reduces.

Because you are receiving them.

9. THE THREE APPLICATIONS

Application 1: The Protective Shield

When someone criticises or accuses you, echo their words before reacting.

They say:

“You never listen to me.”

You echo:

“You... never... listen... to... me.”

Now you have heard it in your own inner voice.

The charge reduces.

You can assess clearly: true, partly true, or projection.

The echo creates space between accusation and defence.

Application 2: Expanded Recall

Echo consistently for one week and recall improves dramatically.

You remember what was actually said.

Not what you thought it meant.

This is not a memory technique.

It is attention.

When you receive fully, you remember naturally.

Application 3: Dissolving Reactivity

Mechanical commentary creates reactivity.

Echoing interrupts it.

You hear words before interpretation forms.

Anxiety reduces because most anxiety lives in commentary, not in reality.

Try echoing during one difficult conversation this week.

Observe the difference.

10. THE DAILY PRACTICE

Morning (2 minutes)

Read something. Echo every word silently.

Set a simple intention:

“Today, I will echo before responding.”

Throughout the day

Choose three conversations. Echo them fully before replying.

Notice:

- What you normally miss
- How your response changes
- When mechanical commentary tries to interrupt
- How the other person responds

Evening (2 minutes)

Review what you noticed in the times you successfully practiced this

11. WHAT TO BRING TO CLASS

After practising this week, bring observations:

- When did echoing work? When did it fail?
- What happened to your recall?
- How did people respond?
- What did mechanical commentary do when displaced?

We will work with whatever emerges.

12. CLASS AGENDA

1. Welcome & Orientation

2. Q&A on the Pre-Class Practice

3. Teaching

- The single-voice mechanism
- Why mechanical narration dominates
- How echoing disrupts identification

4. Guided Echoing Practice (Live)

- Spoken-word echoing
- Group listening
- Shared silence

5. Observations & Reflections

- What changed in listening
- What surprised you
- Differences between hearing and echoing

6. Integration & Next Steps

7. Closing Practice – "I Am" Exercise (10 minutes)

Class concludes in silence. Stay muted. Raise hand for questions.

13. SOURCE NOTE

This practice was first introduced in **Episode 26 of the Martfotai podcast: “I Am Listening – Receiving Without Story.”**

Available at martfotai.com/podcast

14. THIS IS MARTFOTAI

Active.
Experiential.
Verifiable.

This is practice, not philosophy.

Echo this week.
Bring what you discover.

Mechanical commentary has been running your listening.

It is time to reclaim the one voice inside.

See you on Sunday 15th February.

— Gary Eggleton

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